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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - CIA - Terrorist Finance Tracking
Program Iraq North Korea
PARIS - Monday, June 26, 2006

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

CIA - Terrorist Finance Tracking Program
Iraq
North Korea

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

French domestic stories dominate today's news, but the lead front-page story revolves around the Mittal Steel-Arcelor merger, which was finally approved yesterday by Arcelor's Board of Directors. The two economic papers, Les Echos and Le Tribune headline: "Arcelor Resigned to Mittal Takeover." Le Figaro headlines "Arcelor Gives In to Mittal." Also on the domestic front, President Chirac will be the guest of this evening's France 2 8PM newscast where he is expected to renew his support to PM Villepin.

Le Monde carries a full-page interview with Former Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine, who wants Europe to get out of its impasse and find again its own capacity for political initiative. He says it is "dangerous" for Europe to tag along behind the U.S. "The U.S. is the biggest power the world has ever seen, yet, the West is losing its monopoly on the conduct of world affairs. Not its influence, for the West's influence continues to be colossal. But on the strategic level, the world is slowly resembling the WTO, where the wealthiest nations do not make the laws... and have to agree to paradoxical alliances. For centuries we have been leading, and defining the criteria of good and evil... The Americans are dreaming of a global alliance of democracies under their aegis. Hence their reasons for an expanded NATO... and Echelon. This American strategic concept will be adopted by the Europeans because they lack their own. This is a concept for combat. It may be legitimate, but is it legitimate for NATO to operate outside its zone, in Afghanistan? These are major turning points which are not being sufficiently debated."

Le Parisien carries a one-page report on Guantanamo by correspondent Thomas Cantaloube entitled "In the Hell of Guantanamo" after his visit to the detention camp. Cantaloube begins: "The iguanas did not want to move when the camp was built. Cohabitation is great between the reptiles and the detainees. Not so between the prisoners and their wardens. Nevertheless the Americans are very proud of the installations: they point to the arrow painted on the floor showing the direction of Mecca... They are very proud of their carrot and stick system, of the white, off-white and orange jumpsuits..." But Cantaloube contends the carrot and stick system does not work: "camp 4, the 'easy' camp, is practically empty..." About the JTF-GITMO he writes: "The military men in charge show no doubts about their mission, like their President... They are all convinced they are fighting terrorism, like their colleagues in Iraq or Afghanistan... despite the daily insults from prisoners..." But Cantaloube quotes an American soldier at the end of his article: "We Americans are naive, we think we can continue to detain these men indefinitely... Some are guilty, but some are innocent... They have no hope... In their place I would also rebel or commit suicide. One of these days, things are going to blow up here..."

Le Journal du Dimanche interviews Health Minister Xavier Bertrand on the latest avian flu alert in Indonesia where a human-to-human transmission was detected: "We need to take this information seriously because it is the first time we have proof of a human transmission of the disease. But fortunately, the virus has undergone a minimal mutation."

The Sunday-Monday edition of Le Monde leads with "The CIA Accused of Banking Espionage." The front-page article quotes Under Secretary Stuart Levey: "The system gave us an incredible vista onto the operations of terrorist networks..." (See Part C)

France Inter radio's Bernard Guetta devotes his commentary to Iraq's Prime Minister's plan for national reconciliation. (See Part C)

In Le Journal du Dimanche Gilles Delafon devotes his column to the "Nuclear Alert in the Pacific" (See Part C) while Le Figaro devotes a full page to the situation in Somalia, and to Ethiopia's new concerns. Le Figaro interviews Kofi Annan's special representative for Somalia, Francois Fall, who is "encouraged by the recent

agreement between the federal government and the Islamic Tribunals." Falls says "deployment of foreign troops in the region is not being considered for the moment..." Fall is favorable to "the lifting of the weapons embargo" but he is concerned about "a potential armed clash between Somalia and Ethiopia. This is why we have asked all the major powers to use of their influence to stop the Islamic militia from concentrating on the Ethiopian border..."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

CIA - Terrorist Finance Tracking Program

"The CIA Spied on International Banking Transactions"
Eric Leser in left-of-center Le Monde (06/26): "The existence of the Terrorist Finance Tracking Program was confirmed by the Secretary of the Treasury, albeit reluctantly. But says that it is limited to banking operations by individuals suspected of having ties to Al-Qaeda. The program could not have been implemented without the cooperation of the Swift network... The existence of this secret spying network was known to the G-10 central banks. But as in the case of the NSA's eavesdropping, it would appear that the Bush administration has deliberately bypassed the laws protecting individuals in the framework of civil liberties... The Bush administration asked the NYT to refrain from publishing its information, but to no avail."

Iraq

"If the Iraqi Prime Minister Says So..."
Bernard Guetta on government-run France Inter radio (06/26): "Prime Minister al-Maliki's national reconciliation plan is akin to admitting that in Iraq there is no rule of law... Each of his proposals, at once desirable and necessary, underscores what should be and therefore what hasn't been done, and the resulting picture is terrifying. When he asks all political factions to adopt a moderate discourse to instill a climate of confidence, he is saying there is neither confidence nor moderation... The PM has acknowledged the existence of death squads by asking for an end to summary executions... And when he calls for commissions to decide on the liberation of imprisoned innocents, he acknowledges that innocents have been unfairly detained... Punishing those who carry out torture means they have gone unpunished... When he calls for a dialogue with the multinational forces -read the U.S. army - to prevent human rights violations, the implications speak for themselves... Al-Maliki asked for warrants before arrests and searches can proceed... In short, the Prime Minister has just confirmed that in Iraq, instead of an emerging democracy, what reigns is the law of the jungle."

North Korea

"Nuclear Alert in the Pacific"
Gilles Delafon in right-of-center Le Journal du Dimanche (06/25): "Unpredictable North Korea is preparing its missile launch. The fueling of the launcher has started, scrutinized by American spy satellites. Cleverly orchestrated, the provocation has had its effect. South Korea is convinced its neighbor is not bluffing. Japan is deploying its radars and is threatening Pyongyang. Australia is threatening to cut its food aid program. But it is in Washington that the embarrassment level is most obvious. The talks on U.S. economic aid, in exchange for North Korea giving up its nuclear program, between the group of six and North Korea are at an impasse... Washington has opted for diplomacy. But it is not making progress. The North Korean maneuver is clearly of the blackmailing type. Pyongyang knows that Washington is betting on the fall of the North Korean regime, the most ludicrous in the world. Pyongyang knows also that Iran has just been offered the chance of a direct dialogue with the U.S., which North Korea has unsuccessfully been asking for. Hence the danger that North Korea choose an electroshock approach in order to remind Washington of its capacity for harm."

STAPLETON